

KENTUCKY

CHILD FATALITY REVIEW SYSTEM

2001 Annual Child Fatality Review Report



**CABINET FOR HEALTH SERVICES
DEPARTMENT FOR PUBLIC HEALTH
&
KENTUCKY CHILD FATALITY REVIEW STATE TEAM**

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MESSAGE FROM THE COMMISSIONER
Cabinet for Health Services
Department for Public Health

This report summarizes child fatality causes in Kentucky for children under the age of 18 and stresses related risk factors and prevention measures. The report information is based on Kentucky 2001 vital statistics and coroner child fatality report data.

It is very encouraging that the 2001 data reflects that the Kentucky infant mortality rate (5.9) is below that of the national rate (6.9). During recent years many dedicated health care providers have steadfastly promoted and practiced initiatives to provide better access to prenatal care, reduce drug, alcohol and tobacco use, increase folic acid use, and have encouraged proper nutrition and physical exercise in women of child bearing age. We are very grateful for these efforts that are contributing to improvement for Kentucky mothers and their babies. Yet, we must continue with these and other prevention measures as we strive to achieve a standard of excellence regarding infant health and survivability.

Of concern is the fact that transportation related injuries continue to be the predominant cause of Kentucky child deaths between one through 17 years of age. It is imperative that we recognize these injuries as priority public health life threats to children, and couple public awareness and prevention education activities with appropriate supporting primary enforcement legislation.

The September 11, 2001 terrorism attack initiated a strong influence on public health to pre-eminently focus on preventive measures regarding weapons of mass destruction, including chemical and biological warfare. However, the Kentucky Department for Public Health shall continue to implement child safety systems aimed at reducing preventable child deaths, while providing leadership in community based safety preparedness for all Kentucky citizens. All individuals and communities are encouraged to diligently practice injury prevention methods proven to make a significant difference in reducing child injury and fatality. Kentucky children's future depends on assuring a safe and quality community life for them and their families.

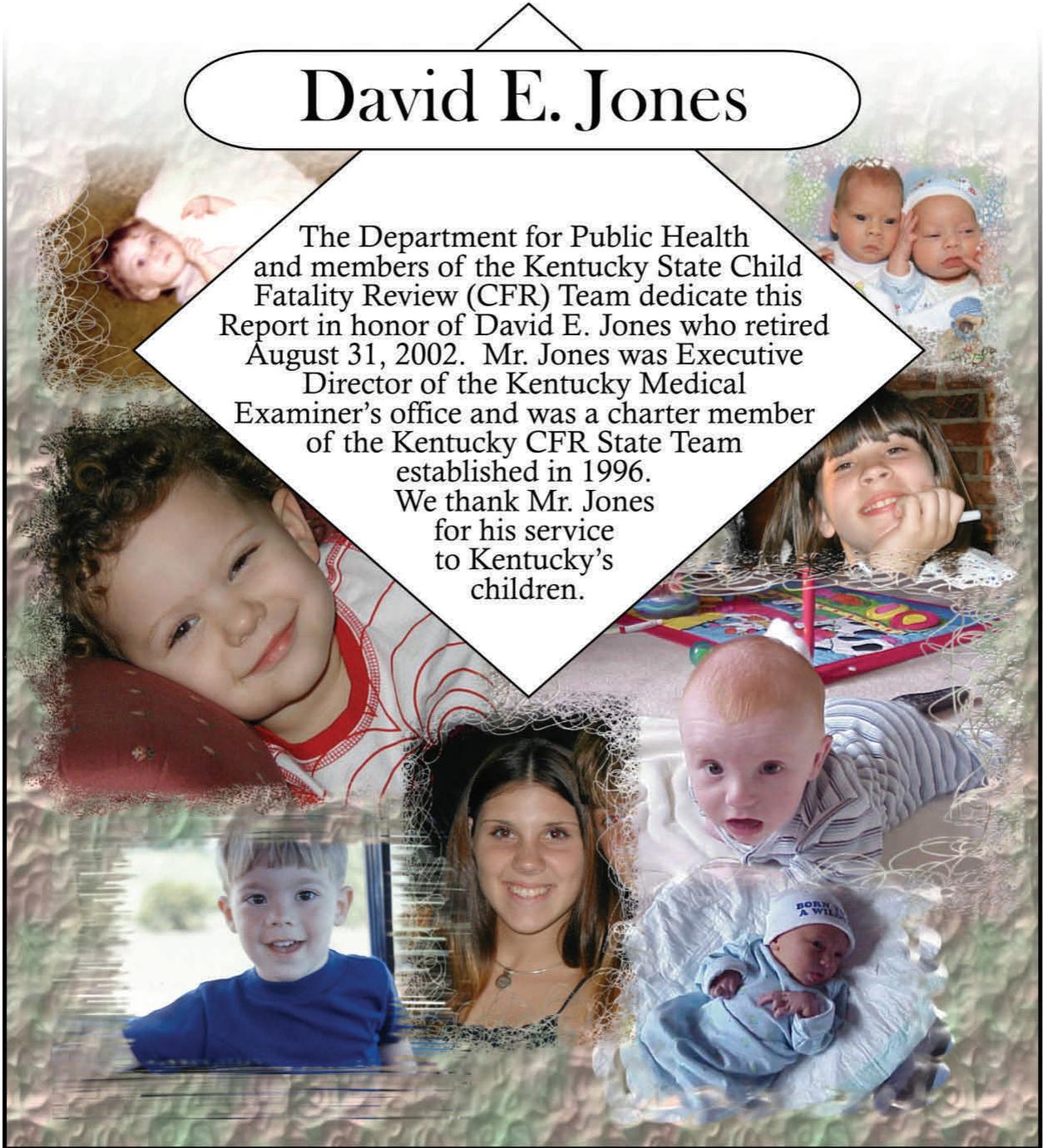
Sincerely,

Rice C. Leach, MD
Commissioner
Department for Public Health

DEDICATION

David E. Jones

The Department for Public Health and members of the Kentucky State Child Fatality Review (CFR) Team dedicate this Report in honor of David E. Jones who retired August 31, 2002. Mr. Jones was Executive Director of the Kentucky Medical Examiner's office and was a charter member of the Kentucky CFR State Team established in 1996. We thank Mr. Jones for his service to Kentucky's children.



ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The development of the 2001 Kentucky Child Fatality Review (CFR) Annual Report was completed by the Department for Public Health staff and the CFR state team members. The Department for Public Health is indeed grateful for the time and effort contributed toward this annual CFR report by all individuals involved.

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We would also like to thank Mark Jewell for the design and development of the front cover of this report and the dedication page.

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Executive Summary

Deaths to children less than 18 years of age are steadily declining in the Commonwealth. In 1997, there were a total of 715 child deaths to Kentucky residents compared to 606 child deaths in 2001. This represents a decline of 15% over the five year period. The majority of child deaths (65%) were due to Natural causes whereas 35% were Injury related causes.

The most common cause of infant mortality was perinatal period conditions followed by congenital anomalies. The most common cause of death to Kentucky's teen population (ages 13-17) was motor vehicle fatalities followed by suicide.

The most common Natural cause child fatality was certain conditions originating in the perinatal period followed by congenital anomalies. The most common Injury related fatality was transportation related fatalities followed by accidental suffocation/strangulation.

Overall, the rate of death was higher among males compared to females (7.1/10,000 vs. 5.0/10,000) with males having a higher rate of Natural cause deaths than Injury related causes (4.3/10,000 vs. 2.7/10,000). Similarly, females had a higher rate of Natural cause deaths than Injury related causes (3.6/10,000 vs. 1.5/10,000).

In terms of age, infants (<1 year of age) had a higher rate of death than any other age group. The rate of death to infants due to Natural causes was almost 10 times that of the rate of death due to Injury related causes (54.2/10,000 vs. 5.5/10,000 respectively). In contrast, deaths to children aged 10-17 were primarily Injury related causes with this age group having a rate of death due to Injuries 2.6 times that of Natural causes (2.6/10,000 vs. 1.0/10,000 respectively).

The following table presents an overview of the comparison of Natural cause child fatalities to Injury cause child fatalities in the Commonwealth of Kentucky for year 2001.

**Comparison of Natural Cause Child Fatalities to
Injury Cause Child Fatalities for Year 2001**

	Grand Total		Natural Cause		Injury Cause	
	#	Rate*	#	Rate*	#	Rate*
Total	606	6.1	395	4.0	211	2.1
Male	363	7.1	221	4.3	140	2.7
Female	243	5.0	174	3.6	71	1.5
Age Groups:						
<1	318	59.8	288	54.2	29	5.5
1-4	74	3.5	38	1.8	36	1.7
5-9	55	2.0	24	0.9	31	1.1
10-17	159	3.5	45	1.0	115	2.6

*Rates are per 10,000 specified population ; Denominator data are based on the U.S. Census Bureau's 2000 census population estimates for Kentucky.
 Note: Classification of death (Natural vs. Injury) is based on the ICD10 code as recorded on the death certificate